

# Shelter-In-Place

## *Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program*

Shelter-in-Place is an effective way to protect you from harmful chemicals that may be in the air. Emergency officials may tell you to *Shelter-in-Place* if an accident at your Army post sends nerve or blister agent into the air. It is important to take shelter **immediately**, and to end shelter **immediately** when told to do so.

*Shelter-in-Place* is a short-term protection. It requires you to stay inside a sealed room for no more than a few hours until the outside air is again safe to breathe. Harmful vapors can work their way into a closed building and even a sealed room. Therefore, you must leave your shelter when experts decide the outside air is cleaner than what may be inside. Depending on the situation, you may be told to ventilate the shelter and building, go outside or leave the area.

*Shelter-in-Place* means to go inside your home or the nearest accessible building without delay. Close and lock all windows and doors. Turn off heating, air conditioning and fans (any ventilation system). Shut air vents (heating, cooling, circulation and fireplace or wood-stove dampers). Quickly shut yourself in a room you can seal off from outside air. Select a room with as few exterior windows or other openings as possible so that you can quickly seal it. Block all openings to the room where outside air can leak in. If possible, use pre-cut plastic sheeting and duct tape to seal cracks and openings that may allow outside air to come into that room.

Take a radio into your shelter so that you can monitor an Emergency Alert System (EAS) station for further instructions. If you don't know which stations are your EAS stations, call your local emergency management agency or Chemical Demilitarization Community Outreach Office *now* to find out. If the shelter room you selected has no phone, take a cordless or cellular phone with you if you have one. See **Shelter-in-Place Kit** fact sheet for more information on how to prepare for Shelter-in-Place.

If your local officials recommend *Shelter-in-Place*:

- *Do not call 9-1-1 unless* there is a life-threatening situation such as a heart attack.
- The schools will protect your children by evacuating or sheltering them. Tune to a local radio or TV station to learn where and when to pick up your children.
- Bring pets indoors if you can find them quickly.
- Go to a small room with few vents, windows and doors. A bathroom may be a good choice if you can seal all openings that might allow outside air into the room.
- Bring a radio with spare batteries, medicine, food or liquids that you might need over the next several hours. If you have a tone-alert radio (indoor warning system) that will work in the shelter room, take it with you.

Follow instructions **immediately when told to end shelter**. In order to bring fresh, clean air inside for you to breathe, you may be told to let outside air into the shelter and building as quickly as possible. Open windows and doors and turn on all air circulation systems and equipment. Thorough and quick ventilation, once local officials tell you to do so, is crucial so that you breathe fresh air as soon as possible.

You may be told to remain indoors in a well-ventilated location, to go outside or to leave the area and go to a specific location for medical screening and to ensure that everyone leaving the area is accounted for. If you cannot leave the area, you will be given special instructions to keep you safe where you are.

If you know you will not be able to follow shelter or end shelter instructions quickly and effectively without help, ask a neighbor or nearby relative about assistance or call your local emergency management agency *now* to assist you with your personal or family emergency plan.